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Press Release

For Immediate Release

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Prevent Child Heatstroke Deaths in Vehicles

Parents and caregivers are urged to take steps to remember not to leave children alone in vehicles. A National Highway Traffic Safety Administration review of child hyperthermia cases noted that a majority of the fatalities occurred due to a change in the driver's regular, everyday routine.

Fact Sheet

Below is a summary of the information KidsAndCars.org has been gathering for over a decade.

- Child vehicular heat stroke deaths for 2012 YTD as of 5/31/12: **3**
- Child vehicular heat stroke deaths for 2011: **33**
- Child vehicular heat stroke deaths for 2009: **33**
- Child vehicular heat stroke deaths from 1998-2011, at least: **519**
- Average number of child vehicular heat stroke deaths per year since 1998: **38 (one every 9 days)**
- The highest number of fatalities for a one-year time period took place in 2010: **49**

Problem

Children are naturally curious and love to explore their surroundings. So, if you leave your kids unattended, in or near a vehicle, it won't be long before they are playing in it. Hide and seek can turn deadly if they get trapped in the trunk, where temperatures can rise very quickly - resulting in heatstroke or asphyxiation.

Prevention Tips

- Teach children not to play in or around cars. Teach them that vehicle trunks are for cargo, not for playing. Explain how dangerous a vehicle's trunk can be.
- Always supervise your children carefully when in and around vehicles.
- Check the trunk right away if your child is missing.
- Lock your car doors and trunk and be sure keys and remote entry devices are out of sight and reach of your kids.
- Keep the rear fold-down seats closed/locked to keep your children from climbing into the trunk from inside your car.

Retrofit Your Car

As of September 1, 2001, auto manufacturers were required to equip all new vehicle trunks with a 'glow in the dark' trunk release inside the trunk compartment. Show your kids how to use the release in case of an emergency.

If your car is older and does not have the 'glow in the dark' trunk release, ask your automobile dealership about getting your vehicle retrofitted with a trunk release mechanism.

- Make a habit of looking in the vehicle - front to back - before walking away.
- Never leave infants or young children unattended in a vehicle—even if the windows are partly open or the engine is running and the air conditioning is on.

- If you are dropping your child off at childcare, and normally it's your spouse or partner who drops them off, have your spouse or partner call you to make sure the drop went according to plan.
- Ask your childcare provider to call you if your child does not show up for childcare.
- Do things to remind yourself that a child is in the vehicle, such as: writing yourself a note and putting the note where you will see it when you leave the vehicle; placing your purse, briefcase or something else you need in the back seat so that you will have to check the back seat when you leave the vehicle; or keeping an object in the car seat, such as a stuffed toy. When the child is buckled in, place the object where the driver will notice it when he or she is leaving the vehicle.
- Always lock vehicle doors and trunks and keep keys out of children's reach. If a child is missing, check the vehicle first, including the trunk.

What you need to know, now.

- Even in cooler temperatures, your vehicle can heat up to dangerous temperatures very quickly. An outside temperature in the mid-60s can cause a vehicle's inside temperature to rise above 110 degrees Fahrenheit. The inside temperature of your car can rise almost 20 degrees Fahrenheit within the first 10 minutes.
- Younger children are more sensitive to heat than older children and adults, and are at greater risk for heatstroke.
- High temperature, humidity and poor ventilation create an extremely dangerous environment in a vehicle trunk.

For additional information contact:

National Highway Traffic Safety Administration - www.nhtsa.dot.gov/keepingkidsafe

www.kidsandcars.org

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